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# People in H&S: Robert W. Pivik

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For Bob Pivik, the multifaceted demands of his position as Executive Office partner responsible for recruitment and college relations have been as broad and varied as his career path in Haskins & Sells has been concentrated in geographic scope.

Born in Renton, Pennsylvania, about thirty miles east of Pittsburgh, Robert W. Pivik was one of three sons and a daughter born to a man who, in his mid-thirties, turned from coal mining to a successful career in local government.

An accomplished saxophone player, the young Bob Pivik had set his sights on becoming a professional musician. By the time he began his senior year in high school, however, his career interests had been refocused, and thus it was that Bob entered Penn State University as a business major who quickly turned his attention to accounting.

His first contact with the Firm was through an H&S Foundation Scholarship Award which he received for academic achievement while an undergraduate. A closer look at H&S and the realities of public accounting came in his senior year, when Bob was a winter intern in our Pittsburgh office. Like most outstanding students, Bob was courted by recruiters from the Big Eight public accounting firms. After visiting the different firms, he narrowed his choice down to two, chose H&S, and began with our Pittsburgh office in 1959 after graduating with honors.

The years in Pittsburgh were busy ones for Bob and his wife Yvonne, whom he had married in 1960. As the family grew at home (a son Keith was born in 1961 and a daughter Sharon in 1965), Bob's responsibilities multiplied at the office.

It was those early years in Pittsburgh that played such a vital role in shaping his outlook toward his chosen career, Bob says. "One of the reasons I find public accounting so interesting is the variety of challenges one is faced with—and this was certainly the case in Pittsburgh. All the opportunity one could want was there," he said.

Staff accountants were encouraged to take on as much responsibility as they could handle, Bob recalls. "I worked on such engagements as PPG Industries,

Crucible Steel and Ormet Corporation and within two years found I was performing at a senior level. I suppose you could say the office had the perfect formula—give the staff the opportunity for growth and as much encouragement as necessary to want to grow."

In 1967 Bob, then a manager, reached a turning point in his career. Partner Colin Park, for whom Bob had worked earlier on a special project, had been asked to establish a new Professional Education and Development Department in EO. Colin chose seven people, Bob among them, to help launch the forerunner to today's Continuing Education group.

"Colin's request that I come to EO was something my wife and I gave much serious thought to," Bob said. "Both of us were born and raised in Pennsylvania and had lived there all our lives—and we were expecting our third child, Tracey. Moving to the New York City area meant a major change, but we decided that you grow by having to make new friends, by sometimes being forced to make these adjustments to your way of life. And the professional opportunity the move offered certainly was important in our thinking and our decision to come to EO."

After two years with PE&D, Bob joined the Mergers and Acquisitions group, then headed by partner Hugh M. Eggan. When Hugh left EO in 1972 to be partner in charge in Cleveland, Bob was put in charge of the group. He was admitted to partnership that same year.

In 1974 Bob was asked to assume responsibility for recruitment and college relations. "This was basically a new post," he said, "directed primarily to the planning, coordinating and assisting in the implementation of a long-range Firm program aimed at ensuring future availability of a pool of quality people from which the Firm could recruit its future leaders."

"Certainly recruitment has always been of great concern to those at the top levels of management. No public accounting firm can maintain the high level of professionalism H&S has unless it can attract the best graduates—and this presupposes that high-caliber students will be there for us to recruit. One of the interesting aspects of the public accounting profes-

sion in this country is the fact that the CPA firms play almost as important a role in ensuring this continuing supply of superior 'recruits' as do the colleges and universities. Certainly the emphasis placed on our recruitment and college-relations program at the very highest levels of the Firm is the clearest indication of just how important it is held to be.

"From a more practical point of view," Bob points out, "you have to remember that Haskins & Sells recruits actively at some four hundred campuses and talks to about fourteen thousand students every year. Although the prime recruitment responsibility is at the practice-office level, close coordination between the offices and EO is vital to the long-term success of this effort."

Bob puts considerable emphasis on maintaining personal contact with the academic community. "There's so much to be done," he said, "and personal contact is important. The only way you can really find out what the deans and faculty at the schools are concerned with, what they think must be done, is to sit down and talk with them. It takes a lot of time, but it's worth it."

Much of Bob's time has gone into developing a more-integrated internal program. "I'm putting a lot of emphasis on establishing a broad-based communications link with leaders in the academic community. At the same time I'm trying to be equally effective as a coordinator of our recruitment and college-relations efforts," he said. As part of this program, Don LaBoskey, formerly personnel director with our Los Angeles office, became permanently attached to Bob's recruitment and college relations section as national coordinator two years ago. Jim Older, a member of the EO personnel department, is also an important part of the team, providing the needed administrative control over many of the ongoing projects.

At the present time several promising programs are being tested. A special summer internship program which holds much promise for the future was initiated this year. (Editor's note: A report on this internship program will appear in an upcoming issue of *H&S Reports*.) A recently



## Photograph not included in Web version

developed recruitment reporting system is being implemented this year and a new emphasis placed on the image of the Firm as projected by our printed materials.

"Our recruitment brochure was completely revised last year," Bob noted, "and we are preparing special collections of H&S publications, placed in new binders, for school and placement-office libraries."

Despite his heavy schedule, Bob maintains an active relationship with college honor societies and professional accounting groups. He is a member of the board of directors of Beta Gamma Sigma Alumni of New York City (Beta Gamma Sigma is the business honor society); a member of the National Advisory Forum of Beta Alpha Psi, the national accounting fraternity; and a member of an American Accounting Association advisory council. In addition, Bob is on the Interest in Accounting Careers Subcommittee of the American Institute of CPAs.

Bob sees a return on the part of today's college student to a more pragmatic approach to education as a preparation for a career. "I find most students really buckling down, working hard to get the most they can out of their school years."

Like all of us, Bob would appreciate more free time. "I consider being with my family as much as possible important, so I haven't been playing as much golf as I'd like. But all of us play tennis, and we've managed to put in a fair amount of time on the courts. I've also coached a boys' recreational league baseball team for five of the past seven years—and we won the championship for two of those."

In Bob Pivik's opinion the Firm has made great progress toward the development of a cohesive, effective recruitment and college-relations program. He expresses satisfaction with what has been accomplished, impatience at what must yet be done. "We made great strides in the past, and our program is really working well now. But I guess you can never really be satisfied; you have to keep reaching for perfection even if you know you'll never attain it. No matter how much you've done, there's still so much to do," he says. ○

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People in H&S

Robert W. Pivik